

Megalaiminae: the correct subfamily-group name for the Asian barbets

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Recently, Short & Horne (2002) used the family-group name Megalaimatinae for the Asian barbets, including the genus *Megalaima* Gray, 1842. Most likely, the spelling was taken from Olson (1991) who, whilst attributing the name to Megalaeminae of Sundevall (1873), stated that Megalaimatinae was grammatically correct, or from Bock (1994) who claimed that it is traceable to Megalaimatidae of Blyth (1852).

Blyth (1852) used Megalaimidae, and not Megalaimatidae, which was either an inadvertent mis-citation or an incorrect modification by Bock (1994); the stem aimat-, from the Greek αἷμα [aima: blood], has nothing to do with the genus *Megalaima*. *Megalaima* Gray, 1842, ends in the Greek word λαιμός [laimos: throat], and was Latinised with a feminine ending. Accordingly, family-group names based on *Megalaima* must be formed using the stem megalaim- (ICZN 1999, Art. 29.3.2), just as Eurylaimidae is formed from *Eurylaimus* Horsfield, 1821, which also ends in the same Greek word but with a masculine Latinised terminus (see examples under Art. 30.1.3 of ICZN 1999). By using Megalaeminae (and *Megalaema* for *Megalaima*), Marshall & Marshall (1870) and Sundevall (1873) inserted puristic Latin spellings ('-laem-' for -laim-) that do not otherwise affect the formation of the family-group name.

Whereas Gray (1870) used Megalaiminae, Jerdon (1862), Stejneger in Kingsley (1885) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) used Megalaimidae. In the synonymy of his Capitonidae, Brodkorb (1971) attributed Megalaiminae [sic] to Sundevall (1873), and Megalaimidae to Stejneger in Kingsley (1885). Evidently, he had overlooked the above-mentioned prior uses of the name.

As shown, the incorrect spelling Megalaimatinae is far from being in prevailing usage (ICZN 1999, Art. 29.5). Therefore, the spelling Megalaiminae must be used as the subfamily-group name for the Asian barbets comprising *Megalaima* and relatives.

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